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GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND

THE ARMY PERSONNEL OFFICE

by

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KLEIKAMP joined the Army immediately after graduating from the Cadet Corps at Karlsruhe in 1918 and was assigned to the 2d Mounted Infantry as an officer candidate.

From 1933 to 1935 he received advanced officer training at the Kriegsakademie, Berlin and was then assigned to the 4th Infantry Division as supply officer. Awarded General Staff Corps status in April 1937, KLEIKAMP served assignments as Operations Officer in the Inspectorate of Eastern Fortifications, and then as Operations Officer in an Infantry Corps. At the outbreak of war he was transferred as intelligence officer to the Fifth Army on the Western Front and a month later, in the same capacity, to Army Group A, also on the Western Front. In May 1941 he was transferred, again as intelligence officer, to Army Group South, on the Eastern Front. Promoted to colonel in May 1941, he was appointed Chief of the Officer Personnel Branch, Army Personnel Office. He was retained in this post until placed in the Officer Reserve Pool in January 1945, in which month he was promoted to Generalmajor.

After attending a training course for division commanders in February 1945, he was placed in command of the 36th Volksgrenadier Division on the Western Front in March 1945. He was taken prisoner by American forces near Ober-Teissendorf, Upper Bavaria on 9 May 1945.

THE ARMY PERSONNEL OFFICE

I. BACKGROUND

1. Introduction. Modern warfare exacts an exceedingly high toll in officers of all grades, a fact which was forcibly brought home by the records of the Army Personnel Office in World War I. In the course of a campaign, this high rate in officer casualties inevitably must lead to a grave crisis in the personnel field and, consequently, to a serious lack in unit commanders, unless an appropriate personnel policy is introduced in good time and vigorously pursued.

A time-honored proverb, which will probably always remain valid, is that an army is as good as its officers. Therefore, it is not sufficient merely to make available an adequate number of officer replacements; what is needed is a reserve pool of good, well qualified officers. This is a problem which the personnel office of every army must face if it desires to be instrumental in maintaining for the high command the morale, striking power and efficiency of troops during a protracted campaign. The problem is rendered particularly difficult during war by the necessity to provide officers for the activation of new units and for the rehabilitation of battered units.

From what has been said above it will be seen that the mission of the German Army Personnel Office in World War II was to direct personnel policies in such a manner that it could readily make available to the Army High Command officers of all ranks for immediate employment in all posts

which became vacant. The purpose of the present study is to describe the means available to the Personnel Office during the war, the difficulties which had to be surmounted and the impromptu measures which had to be adopted in the effort to perform this mission.

2. The Army Personnel Office in the 1929-1945 Period. Details on the organization of the Office will be found in charts B-D at the end of this manuscript.

Only the files of army officers and officer candidates were handled by the Personnel Office; enlisted personnel, including non-commissioned officers, were the responsibility of the Army Matters Branch of the General Army Office, which was controlled by the Commander of the Replacement Training Army. The files of air force and naval officers were handled independently by the personnel offices of the Luftwaffe and the Navy.

After 1933, the table of organization for the Army Personnel Office provided for a chief with the rank of a corps commander. During the Reichswehr* period, the Office was directly responsible to the Chief of the Army High Command, later it was responsible to the Commander in Chief of the Army. After Generalfeldmarschall von Brauchitsch resigned from his post as Commander in Chief of the Army in 1941, this post remained vacant. His authority in respect to officer personnel affairs was transferred nominally to Generalfeldmarschall Keitel, Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command,

* The period from the end of World War I to 1935, in which year Germany repudiated the Treaty of Versailles, under which Germany had been allowed to maintain an army 100,000 strong, which was called the Reichswehr.

although the Personnel Office was not placed under the Wehrmacht High Command. Later, on 1 October 1942, Generalmajor Schmundt, senior military aide to Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, was appointed Chief of the Army Personnel Office in addition to his other functions. Finally, the Office was placed directly under Hitler.

Besides the Army Personnel Office, the commanders of all T/O units, staffs and other installations also played an important role in the application of officer personnel policies. In respect to ordnance and specialist officers, they were guided in doing so by the advice of the administrative superiors of the officers concerned.

3. The Officer Personnel Situation Before the War. The increasingly rapid growth of the army after 1933 created an extremely difficult situation for the Army Personnel Office. Before 1933, there had been only the Reichswehr*, which had 4000 officers, a relatively small number of officer candidates and no reserve officers. The Personnel Office therefore had to find ways and means to perform its mission, which was the creation of a corps of officers and reserve officers for an expanded army. The simultaneous expansion of the Navy, the Luftwaffe and the Waffen-SS, all of which also needed officer personnel, added to the existing difficulties.

The progressively rapid growth of the army after 1933 was the cause of all the difficulties which were encountered during World War II in meeting officer requirements.

The first target of the Personnel Office was to expand and develop the existing corps of 4000 regular officers and also to establish a new

* The 100,000 men army Germany was allowed to maintain in terms of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I.

and sufficiently large officers' reserve corps. To this end, the following measures were introduced:

a. On the basis of recommendations by unit commanders and by officers specially appointed for the purpose, officers of World War I who had left the army after 1918 were called up for selective training courses. If they proved suitable, they were reactivated and granted regular officer status with rank and seniority according to their former rank, their qualifications and their age. Age was a factor which had to be taken into consideration in order to avoid the danger of having too many overage officers in the various ranks. Those who were not fit for employment in field units owing to their age or qualifications were classified as "officers on the supplementary list." They were also granted regular officer status but were promoted more slowly and not beyond the rank of colonel, and were employed primarily in recruiting and conscription offices, higher level staffs and similar assignments.

b. Officers of the state police force were transferred to the regular officer corps of the army. The majority retained the rank they had held in the police force.

c. Large numbers of professional non-commissioned officers of the Reichswehr were promoted to officer rank and taken into the regular officer corps.

It was naturally also important to increase considerably the number of officer candidates and, at the same time, the number of officer candidate schools. Officer candidates were drawn from all classes of the population

and from enlisted men serving in the army.

Concurrently with the work described above, the Personnel Office set about organizing an adequate officers' reserve corps. For this purpose, officers who had served in World War I were retrained in accordance with modern standards. In addition, young men who had completed their mandatory term of service in the new army were promoted to officers of the reserve either after serving an extra year or after taking part in a number of maneuvers, to which they were recalled by their units.

The Personnel Office was also in charge of training, retraining and education. Officers had to be retrained for arms which had not existed in the Reichswehr (armor, heavy artillery, chemical troops). To make matters worse than they already were, numerous highly qualified officers of the existing cadre of 4000 taken over from the Reichswehr had to be transferred to the newly created Luftwaffe.

4. The Situation at the Beginning of the War: Service Status and Categories of Officers

In spite of numerous complications and in spite of the increasing rate at which new units were being activated, the Personnel Office succeeded by 1939 in developing a new officer corps and an officers' reserve corps. Due to the organizational measures taken and the expedients employed as well as to the versatile training and educational program which had been introduced, a numerically adequate corps of qualified officers was available to the Army High Command when the war broke out. Particularly the regular officer corps, which had been quadrupled since 1933, had attained a

remarkably high standard of training, although it still lacked uniformity in some respects and although the age strata of its personnel were somewhat irregular. The officers' reserve corps had not reached the same high standards. The gap between the officers of 1918 and the rising generation of reserve officers was too great to be properly spanned. An additional cause for the lack of uniformity and the inadequate standards of performances of the officers' reserve corps was the short period of training. However, the training and education of officer candidates was progressing according to schedule.

Owing to the various expedients used in organizing the officer corps, the service status of officers varied widely and a large number of categories had developed. They were as follows:

a. Service status

(1) Regular officers: Professional officers in regular military service.

(2) Regular officers retired subject to recall: Former regular officers who were placed in the reserve because of their age or physical conditions. They could be recalled for active service if necessary during war.

(3) Reserve officers: officers who could be called up for military service in peace or war.

(4) Reserve officers retired subject to recall: Officers of the imperial army, before 1918, who, because of their age or physical condition were not appointed as normal reserve officers. They could be

recalled for military service in war and were usually employed at office work.

(5) Retired officers: Former officers of any category whose recall for regular military service was not contemplated.

b. Categories

(1) Regular officers: professional officers in regular military service, called-up reserve officers, all recalled regular officers who had been retired subject to recall, unless they were classified as officers on the supplementary list, officer specialists or officers of the specialized services.

(2) Officers on the supplementary list: Former officers who returned to service after rearmament with regular officers status (including officers in specialized careers) but who were unfit for service with troops because of their age or physical condition. They were usually employed at office work. This category was abolished during the war and the officers were given the normal status of regular officers.

(3) Specialist officers: All officers in the medical, veterinary, ordnance and motor vehicle maintenance services (the ordnance service was responsible for the administration, maintenance and repair of all ordnance materiel and ammunition but not for motor vehicles. Officers of the motor maintenance service were officers who had specialized technical training; this service was responsible for the administration, maintenance and repair of motor vehicles -- including tanks -- and controlled motorized supply and maintenance units).

(4) Officers of the specialized services: Officers of the administrative services and of the Judge Advocate Branch. This designation was created in 1944, prior to which date the officers in this category had been designated "army officials."

(5) Technicians: Interpreters, news reporters, economic officers and so forth, who were granted temporary officer status for the duration of their employment in order to facilitate their work. They wore no officer insignia and had no command authority. Usually they were employed in higher staffs, military administration headquarters and in special units, such as propaganda companies. This category was established only as a stop-gap measure and most of the technicians were replaced later by regular officers.

II. THE ASSIGNMENT OF OFFICER PERSONNEL

1. Preparations for Mobilization. Strictly speaking, the preparatory work for mobilization in the personnel field was not a responsibility of the Army Personnel Office. The filling of vacancies at high level, down to the level of brigade commanders, and of general staff vacancies, was the responsibility of the Central Branch of the Army General Staff. Under instructions from the Commander in Chief of the Army and from the Chief of the Army General Staff, this branch did all preparatory work, as far as the assignment of such personnel was concerned, in consultation with the Personnel Office. Regimental and battalion commanders were assigned by the various corps headquarters in agreement with the Personnel Office.

The wartime assignment of other officers down to the level of platoon leaders was the responsibility of the individual divisions, whose preparations for mobilization were reviewed by the appropriate corps headquarters.

With respect to preparations for mobilization in the personnel field, the Personnel Office was concerned chiefly with the activation of divisions of the first four waves. The divisions of the first wave were those of the peacetime army, those of the second, third and fourth waves were in the nature of divisions of the first and second reserve. The intention was that at least 50 percent of the officers assigned to the first four waves of divisions were to be regular officers. Owing to the difficulties encountered in building up the army, this goal was not realized, but the situation was to be remedied by the assignment of particularly qualified officers from schools. The schools were to reduce or entirely suspend their operations temporarily upon the opening of hostilities.

Up to 1939 it had not been possible to form an adequate officers' reserve corps because of the large number of new units which were being activated and it was only during the latter part of the war that this goal was achieved. Various systems were employed during the war in assigning officers to newly activated units or to badly battered units which were being rehabilitated. Initially, officers were transferred from regular field units for this purpose, later, they were assigned from the officer reserve pool of the Personnel Office, from the individual army groups

or from the officers available in the Wehrkreise*.

2. The Assignment of Officers at the Beginning of the War. At the beginning of the war the responsibility for the filling of vacancies was regulated as follows:

General officers and the commanders of regiments and administratively independent battalions were assigned directly by the Personnel Office.

General Staff Corps officers were assigned by the Central Branch of the Army General Staff. In 1942 this responsibility was transferred to Group P-3 of the Personnel Office. From then on general officers to be employed as unit commanders and General Staff Corps officers were assigned by the Personnel Office according to instructions from the Commander in Chief of the Army and in close cooperation with the Chief of the Army General Staff.

Personnel officers and assistant staff officers in higher headquarters, commanders of Wehrkreise and commanders of service and officer candidate schools were also assigned by the Personnel Office.

In battalions which were not administratively independent, vacancies were filled by the appropriate division headquarters. All other officer vacancies were filled by the regimental headquarters.

Transfers within divisions were handled by the division headquarters concerned unless a change of arm was involved.

Transfers from the Replacement Training Army to the Field Army took

* The basic military areas of Germany, in some respect similar to the pre-war corps areas in USA.

place exclusively by order of the Personnel Office, which usually specified the number of platoon leaders, company commanders and so forth to be transferred and the arms of which they were to be members. The Wehrkreis headquarters, which were controlled by the Commander of the Replacement Training Army, selected the individual officers and arranged for their transportation.

With the growing requirements of the Field Army as the war dragged on, the officer replacement distribution system changed, and the Personnel Office, as the central agency, finally assumed complete control of the assignment of officer personnel to the Field Army.

3. General Staff Corps Officers. The personnel affairs of the General Staff Corps were handled by the Personnel Office up to 1935, by the Central Branch of the Army General Staff from 1935 to 1942 and again by the Personnel Office from then on. The chief reason for this latter change seems to have been the need for a firm, centralized, control because of the extremely strained officer personnel situation.

Owing to the difficulties encountered in the personnel field during the expansion of the army, the number of General Staff Corps officers available had always been too small to fill all general staff vacancies, and it had been impossible for the Personnel Office to release an adequate number of line officers from the field forces for general staff training since the number of officers in the service had been too small to fill all vacancies as unit commanders at lower levels. Consequently, it remained difficult to fill all general staff vacancies throughout the war and even

the liberal recruitment of general staff candidates initiated in 1943 failed to close the gap. The large numbers of General Staff Corps officers lost from 1943 on (at Stalingrad, for instance) made the build-up of a large reserve impossible. In 1942 the number of general staff vacancies was 2,000, the number of regular General Staff Corps officers available only roughly eight hundred.

In the years immediately preceding the war and also during the first years of warfare, the Central Branch of the Army General Staff had taken devious measures to remedy this situation. Thus, the Kriegsakademie*, which had been closed at the beginning of the war, was reopened in Dresden in the form of officer training courses, reserve officers were assigned to fill some of the less important posts normally reserved for General Staff Corps officers (supply and intelligence officers at division and corps level, for instance) and overage General Staff Corps officers who had served in World War I were recalled and assigned to commands on quiet fronts. In this way it had been possible, on the whole, to fill all general staff vacancies up to 1942.

From the autumn of 1942 on, however, the mounting losses in General Staff Corps officers, especially on the eastern front, together with the requirement of the Personnel Office that more General Staff Corps officers were to be released for employment as unit commanders at the front, made a substantial increase in the number of general staff officer candidates

* German equivalent of the US Command and General Staff School.

imperative.

In spite of the grave personnel situation, the Personnel Office, which had just been reorganized under Generalmajor Schmundt and was determined to train a sufficient number of general staff candidates, made the necessary number of junior officers available. Meanwhile, the training courses had been transferred from Dresden to Berlin, where they were later reorganized and supplemented to form a new Kriegsakademie. The main difficulty here was the large number of instructors required, since general staff officers had to be withdrawn for this purpose from front units, where they were urgently needed as chiefs of staff.

In the officer training courses the period of training had been only a few weeks, in the new Kriegsakademie it was extended to six months. Young officers were selected for training by Branch P-3 of the Personnel Office and were first employed for a period of several months in assignments on division, corps or similar staffs, where they were able to familiarize themselves with staff work and where they were rated according to their performances. Then, they were detached temporarily for service with arms other than their own at the front or at service schools. Finally, after this period of from nine to twelve months of training in front headquarters and field units, they were transferred to the Kriegsakademie. In this way the young officer received advanced training over a period of roughly eighteen months, in addition to the fund of practical experience he had gained previously in combat, before he began his service as a junior General Staff Corps officer.

In spite of all wartime difficulties and in spite of the acute problem presented by the necessity to fill vacancies, this program was adhered to consistently in order to insure that the training of these junior officers would be maintained at as high a level as possible. To relieve the pressing shortage of General Staff Corps officers, concurrent courses were organized, each attended by about 200 to 250 officers, so that Group P-3 could rely on two courses being completed in 1943 and three annually from 1944 on. In exceptional cases, particularly well qualified officers were transferred to the General Staff Corps from staffs and field units without having to undergo this long period of training. However, in spite of all efforts, it naturally required time before all these organizational measures could affect the situation.

In the subsequent training of junior General Staff Corps officers, the rule was retained that no officer could be employed as operations officer at division level before he had served in an assignement as supply and administration officer or as intelligence officer at division or corps level. The objective was that the operations officer of a division was to have a sound knowledge of the basic functions of the general staff with troops, in addition to a satisfactory record of performance as operations officer, before he could fill chief of staff or other General Staff positions at higher levels.

The few regular General Staff Corps officers who were available naturally had to be employed continuously in general staff positions even when they were due for assignements in command of divisions or larger

units. This was a particularly severe hardship for senior General Staff Corps officers and required a great measure of abnegation and devotion to duty on their part. The failure to release them for employment as commanders of combat units resulted in considerable disadvantages for them since the new promotion regulations, which will be discussed later in this study, stipulated that only officers serving in combat units at the front were to be awarded preferential promotion. To ameliorate this inequity, a new promotion schedule for General Staff Corps officers was adopted at the end of 1942. This position-rank schedule provided, for instance, the rank of lieutenant colonel for the position of operations officer at division level and colonel for the position of chief of staff at corps level, and required that the officer concerned must give satisfactory service in his assignment before he could be promoted to the rank comensurate with that assignment. Since the nature of general staff work is such that an officer must serve for a considerable time in an assignment before he can make himself felt, it remained impossible for the General Staff Corps officer, in contrast with commanders of units in the field, to gain a number of successive promotions at brief intervals, so that he was overtaken in the course of time by substantially younger line officers. The normal system of promotion according to seniority remained in effect concurrently with the system of preferential promotion according to merit. The position-rank promotion schedule described above was intended only as an expedient to enable General Staff Corps officers to earn preferential promotion and was to be discontinued as soon as sufficient officers were available to

make possible their release for assignment as unit commanders in order to enable them to earn preferential promotion on the field of battle.

To prevent General Staff Corps officers losing close touch with front line conditions, they were detached from time to time, in an increasing measure from 1943 on, for brief terms of service in combat units at the front within the command of the unit of which they were members, a practice which proved highly satisfactory. In addition, frequent visits to the front line helped to maintain the necessary close contact.

Recommendations for the assignment of General Staff Corps officers to general staff positions were prepared by the chief of the Central Branch of the Army General Staff (later by Group P-3 of the Personnel Office) and submitted to the Chief of the Army General Staff. If he approved, the Chief of the Army General Staff addressed an appropriate request to the Personnel Office, which, in turn, ordered the appointment.

As the senior officer of the General Staff Corps, the Chief of the Army General Staff was responsible for the training, education and employment of all General Staff officers. The only authority which the Personnel Office had was to order assignments, transfers and promotions under instructions from and in accordance with the decisions of the Commander in Chief of the Army. Recommendations for decorations to be awarded were submitted by the Personnel Office to the Chief of the Army General Staff for approval. It was only in the final stages of the war that this influence which the Chief of the Army General Staff exercised over

all General Staff Corps officers was modified. At that time Group P-3 of the Personnel Office was transferred to a site far distant from the headquarters of the Chief of the Army General Staff and the daily personal reports by the chief of Group P-3 had to be discontinued. At the same time, the rapidly changing and critical strategic situation toward the end of the war frequently necessitated quick action, so that decisions concerning the assignment of General Staff Corps officers had to be made without prior approval by the Chief of the Army General Staff.

In retrospect it can be said that a better solution would have been for the Central Branch of the Army General Staff to have continued handling the personnel affairs of the General Staff Corps since it was immediately subordinate to the Chief of the Army General Staff and always had its offices in close proximity to his. The transfer of this responsibility from the Central Branch to the Personnel Office admittedly facilitated and accelerated the handling of replacements, but the fact that the branch of the Personnel Office now responsible was so far separated from the Chief of the Army General Staff undoubtedly had an adverse effect on the assignment and the training of General Staff Corps officers. Probably, the best solution would have been a compromise, namely, retention of the responsibility for the personnel affairs of the General Staff Corps by the Central Branch and the attachment of a permanent liaison officer of that branch to the Personnel Office.

In this section it has been necessary to treat out of their turn certain measures which the Personnel Office introduced during periods

which are dealt with more fully in the following sections of this study.

III. DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE WAR

1. The Situation in 1940-1942. Up to the opening of the campaign in Russia, relatively few officers were lost. In spite of the fact that numerous new units were activated, the measures introduced by the Personnel Office had therefore made it possible to build up a sizable officer reserve, so that all requirements could be met at the beginning of the campaign although losses were severe.

However, the hopes of the high command that a decision could be forced and the war brought to a close in 1941 failed to materialize. On the contrary, the increasingly fierce fighting in the East, particularly in the winter of 1941-42, resulted in a steadily mounting officer casualty rate. In 1942, the Personnel Office therefore found it necessary to introduce extensive and drastic measures to create an adequate reserve of officers in order to avert a grave officer personnel crisis, which would have jeopardized the striking power of the army.

2. Problems After the Autumn of 1942. On 1 October 1942, Generalmajor Schmundt was appointed Chief of the Army Personnel Office in addition to his responsibilities as senior military aide to Hitler. This dual function gave the new chief a very strong position, particularly in matters which had to be decided personally by Hitler as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. Since a large part of the time of the new chief was taken up by his responsibilities as senior aide to the Supreme Commander

of the Wehrmacht, a deputy chief of the Personnel Office was appointed, who was to supervise all subdivisions of the Personnel Office and carry out the necessary organizational measures. The development of the situation in respect to officer personnel in 1942 necessitated the immediate introduction of sweeping measures to expand the officer corps to such an extent that, no matter how high the rate of casualties might be, the development of a critical shortage of officer personnel would be precluded. This meant that an adequate officer reserve had to be created in addition to the current needs of the army. In addition, an adequate number of appropriately qualified officers had to be obtained speedily for assignment as commanders of units down to battalion level, in order to meet the increased requirements. The Personnel Office therefore was faced by the following problems:

a. The close cooperation of all field units had to be secured.

b. Steps had to be taken to remedy the shortage of unit commanders.

c. A new program for the training and retraining of officers had to be introduced.

d. A new system had to be found to increase the recruitment and training of officer candidates.

e. The promotion system had to be reorganized.

f. A new system had to be devised to secure the officers

required for the activation of new units and for the rehabilitation or reactivation of badly mauled or destroyed units.

g. The existing system for the requisitioning and assignment of officers had to be reorganized.

j. A system of officer personnel adjustments had to be devised.

3. Measures Adopted to Solve the Problems Listed Above.

a. Close Cooperation with Field Units. Senior personnel officers were appointed and attached to all divisions and larger units. These officers were carefully selected and first detached for a period of training in the newly established courses for the senior adjutant service, where they were thoroughly briefed on the new goals that were to be reached. These courses also served as centers through which new regulations could be transmitted without delay and at which any new measures which might have to be introduced could be discussed. The senior personnel officers were furnished far wider authority and assigned more responsibilities than had been the case with unit personnel officers hitherto.

b. The Shortage of Unit Commanders. Entirely new methods had to be adopted to remove this deficiency. Above all, it was now important to insure that no officer was assigned to a post which a less well qualified officer could fill. A number of new regulations were therefore issued in November 1942 concerning the preferential treatment of officers who possessed the gift of leadership. At the same time the promotion program was rearranged.

In order to be able to register all officers who obviously seemed

suitable for employment in positions of higher responsibility, all commands were instructed to maintain "Promotion Lists," which were to be submitted to the Personnel Office at three-monthly intervals. All general officers and field grade officers, including those of the General Staff Corps, were to be included in these lists regardless of their seniority or age. The names of these officers were to be arranged in groups showing:

(1) officers who were rated unconditionally as born leaders;

(2) officers of whom it could be assumed that they would perform satisfactorily in command of the unit next above the one they were presently commanding and later in command of the next higher unit;

(3) officers who were recommended for temporary assignment in command of the next higher unit in order to afford them an opportunity to prove their abilities.

In addition, all higher-level commands were required to maintain "Recommendation Lists" showing all officers who were considered suitable for immediate assignment as army, corps, division or regimental commanders, and who were not presently employed as such. Constant use was made of these lists in the Personnel Office.

In order to prevent battalion and company commanders who were considered suitable for the next higher assignment being retained in their present assignments, which would have meant that they were being employed in positions below those for which they were qualified, instructions had been given that all battalion commanders considered fully qualified for

assignment as regimental commanders were to be transferred to the officer reserve pool of the appropriate army headquarters and all company commanders considered fully qualified for assignment as battalion commanders and for whom no such vacancies existed within their division, to the officer reserve pool of the appropriate corps headquarters. These transfers were to take place without specific orders from higher headquarters.

In some cases these regulations did not meet with a sympathetic reception in the field forces. Some unit commanders failed to realize how serious the over-all situation was in respect to personnel replacements while others, for selfish reasons, wished to retain good officers and therefore continued to employ them in positions below the level of their capabilities. However, since the roster of officer personnel and their assignments had to be submitted to the Personnel Office each month, a constant check was possible.

The officers placed in the various army and corps officer reserve pools were transferred by the Personnel Office to the Army High Command officer reserve pool and detached for training in courses for division, regimental and battalion commanders, after which they were assigned according to their abilities.

The exaggerated application of this system in some cases led to officers being placed in command of divisions who, though qualified for such positions as far as their military proficiency was concerned, were too young to assume the responsibility for the training and command of such large, combined arms units. It must be admitted that in some cases these

young officers performed satisfactorily in every respect in spite of their youth, but these were exceptional cases which only served to prove the rule. On the whole, however, the measures described were appropriate, quite apart from the fact that the heavy losses suffered made such drastic expedients categorically necessary.

c. Training and Retraining of Officers. The lack of unit commanders necessitated a thorough retraining of officers who had been intended for other types of employment. Here, the training received within units was not sufficient and had to be supplemented by training in courses conducted by higher level commands or by the Army High Command. Most of the courses arranged by the Army High Command were held in the service schools in the zone of interior. The courses for company, battalion and regimental commanders, which were separated according to arms and on the average extended over a period of four to six weeks, proved particularly valuable. In addition, continuous courses of four to six weeks' duration were conducted from January 1943 on for officers who were to take command of divisions and corps. These officers were given the appropriate tactical training and also attended lectures on the various subjects which would be of importance to them in their assignments at higher level. Furthermore, the courses afforded an opportunity for a final selection and appraisal of the officers attending them.

Courses were also conducted at the service schools for the training of instructors, specialists and so forth, while in other courses officers of the various arms and services were retrained for employment in other

standard of education in the officer corps, but these risks had to be accepted to meet the requirements of war. An advantage was that the officer corps now was firmly rooted in all classes of the population and that new sources could be tapped.

In its search for potential officers, the Army met with keen and constant competition by the navy, the Luftwaffe and the Waffen-SS. The Waffen-SS was particularly successful in obtaining volunteers by means of energetic propaganda in the zone of interior, in the Hitler Youth, the Reich Labor Service, and in the Adolf Hitler,* "Napola" and other schools. This influence was extremely harmful to the interests of the army and in order to counter it, an "Inspector of Army Officer Procurement Centers" was appointed under the chief of the Army Personnel Office in 1943. In March 1944, the authority of the inspector was extended to cover the procurement of reserve officers and candidates for non-commissioned officer rank. Later in 1944, the inspector was transferred from the Personnel Office and placed under a newly appointed "Inspector General for the Procurement of Officers and NCO's".

The inspector controlled seventeen officer candidate procurement centers, which operated under the various Wehrkreise. Each of these centers employed fifteen or sixteen officers, who worked in close cooperation with the various schools, recruiting offices and other authorities in the recruiting and testing of officer applicants. Within a very

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* Educational establishments of the National Socialist Party in which selected youths were educated and trained in the spirit of National Socialism.

short while, these centers succeeded in multiplying the number of officer candidates for the army. At the same time efforts were made to secure as officer candidates suitable non-commissioned officers and privates, including those who were still receiving basic training. With the co-operation of all unit commanders, the Personnel Office succeeded in obtaining a steady supply of good officer personnel from this source.

All candidates entered the officer career as officer candidate NCOs, which status they could only be granted by the commander of a combat unit after they had proved their suitability. The principle was retained that every officer candidate must work his way up from the bottom and, during a war, must perform satisfactorily in actual combat before he could be promoted to officer rank.

In spite of the strained personnel situation, all officers received a thorough training right up to the end of the war. The requirement that each officer candidate must serve in two assignments with combat units in addition to the time spent at training schools made it impossible for an applicant to obtain officer rank in less than fourteen to eighteen months. The program was very much the same for candidates of the officers' reserve corps, until they reached the rank of master sergeant (Oberfeahnrich). The only material difference was that these candidates were not required to complete the master sergeant course, which lasted two months, at an officer candidate NCO school.

From early 1943 to the end of the war roughly 100,000 of these officer candidates, who came from the most varied walks of life, were

than their basic arms. Thus, officers of the Signal Corps or of other arms in which the losses were not so high because of the nature of their employment, received infantry, artillery or armored training. The need for officers and particularly for unit commanders was greatest in these three arms, since they suffered the heaviest losses. The largest number of these retrained officers came from the Signal Corps, from which many excellent officers were transferred to other arms, particularly to the infantry.

This retraining program was not confined to line officers but was extended also to officers of the specialized services. Thus, after mid-1944, roughly 15,000 officers of the specialized services were released for retraining as infantry and artillery officers.

The importance of these training and retraining courses grew as the war drew on and they proved particularly useful in the effort to build up the necessary officer reserve, particularly as far as unit commanders were concerned.

d. The Numerical Increase and Accelerated Training of Officer Candidates. Officer Candidates were secured among the newly drafted conscripts and among enlisted men undergoing basic training, as well as among privates and non-commissioned officers of the Field Army who had shown in battle that they possessed the necessary qualities.

Personality and military aptitude now were the only qualities which governed the selection of officer candidates. This brought about a gradual change in the social strata and an inevitable lowering of the general

promoted to officer rank. On the whole this number was adequate, although shortages did arise in certain arms as a result of heavy losses. To meet these shortages, the training period was reduced to twelve months and officers from other arms were retrained.

e. Reorganization of the Promotion System. Under normal circumstances, the position to which an officer is assigned is decided largely by his rank. Prior to the war, it was a standing practice to promote to the next rank every officer who performed satisfactorily in his present assignment, provided he was due for promotion according to the seniority list. Preferential promotion, that is, promotion besides the regular schedule, was granted only in extremely rare cases for exceptionally good performances, as was the case with officers of the General Staff Corps. This rule was retained at the beginning of the war but it was soon found to be out of keeping with the principle of promotion on performance, particularly since it would have led to officers at the front being at a disadvantage in comparison with officers employed chiefly in the zone of interior, as far as promotion was concerned, in a war of any duration.

In developing an adequate reserve of officers it therefore had been found necessary, when transferring officers to units of the Field Army, to change the promotion system in favor of the officers employed in actual combat. This change took place in 1942. The basic principle of the new system was that an officer who performed satisfactorily in command of a unit in combat was to be promoted to the rank commensurate with his assignment regardless of his age or time in service. This meant pre-

ferential promotion and placed the officer in the Field Army at an advantage over officers serving in the zone of interior, who were promoted more slowly in conformance with the old system. Thus, a second lieutenant commanding a company at the front could be promoted to the rank of first lieutenant after two months of satisfactory performance. If he continued to perform satisfactorily he could receive further preferential promotion to the rank of captain after a further period of six months upon recommendation by his superior, since the rank of captain was commensurate with the assignment as company commander. The elements of chance, which resulted in obvious inequities, were counterbalanced by timely transfers (Officer Personnel Adjustments, page 35 Section h), which proved particularly necessary toward the end of the war.

This new system of promotion chiefly favored the officers serving in combat units and particularly those in units of the arms which suffered the heaviest losses, so that it can be said that the casualty rate regulated the rate of promotion.

To remove certain injustices, preferential promotion also could be awarded to officers who could not be released to earn promotion on the field of battle because of the necessity to retain them in important staff assignments for a long period.

The officers chiefly concerned here were those in the general staff and the senior adjutant services as well as training instructors and so forth, at corps level and in higher level staffs and schools. In the case of these officers, matters were equalized to a limited degree by the

position-rank system, according to which an officer who performed satisfactorily in an assignment for a certain period could receive preferential promotion. However, promotion under this system was naturally much slower than under the system of preferential promotion in force at the front. For this reason every effort was made to release these officers for assignment to the front in order to afford them an opportunity to earn preferential promotion in combat.

Concurrently with the new system of preferential promotion, the old system was retained in a revised form and with an accelerated rate of promotion according to seniority. It also remained possible to advance an officer's name on the seniority list and thereby accelerate his promotion. This was another way in which undue disadvantages could be ameliorated and exceptionally good performances rewarded. By early 1944, the number of preferential promotions exceeded the number of promotions granted under the regular schedule.

In addition to the system of preferential promotion, a system of retarded promotion was also in force. This system was applied to officers who were not employed or intended for employment as unit commanders during the war and to officers who had been employed as such but had proved unsatisfactory in their performances. These officers were continued in their grades for a period of six months after their promotion was due on the basis of their position on the seniority list. Later this period was extended to two years.

All officers who failed to perform satisfactorily in the posts to

which they were assigned and all those who were not considered suitable for promotion when their promotion was due remained in their rank or were discharged from the regular service.

For officers of the reserve and recalled regular officers of the "retired subject to recall" category, the same promotion system applied as was in force for normal regular officers.

Special and extensive regulations protected wounded and permanently disabled officers and officer candidates against disadvantages in respect to promotion. In certain circumstances, officers killed in action or who had died from natural causes could be promoted posthumously. The Personnel Office alone was responsible for all officer promotions and for the promotion of officer candidates to officer rank.

The promotion regulations outlined above were a complete innovation as far as the preferential promotion of line officers was concerned and represented a deliberate break with the principles which had been in force until the autumn of 1942. The preferential promotion of line officers was necessary in order to obtain the required unit commanders for the Field Army, and, with proper cooperation by existing unit commanders in the compilation of recommendation lists, was bound to fulfill the purpose for which the system was designed. It was impossible to avoid the danger of very young officers reaching very high ranks, just as it was not possible to preclude unjust disadvantages for officers serving on staffs and in schools. It was only later in the war, when the losses in officer personnel reached an excessive rate, that the system of preferential promotions proved too extensive. For this reason, changes were under

consideration toward the end of 1944 with a view to coupling the preferential promotions with certain age restrictions. Experience showed in particular that it was unwise to have too youthful officers in the higher ranks, for instance in assignments as division commanders.

Finally, the fact deserves mention that the problem of preferential promotion for line officers had been raised in World War I, as shown by a memorandum submitted during that war by Generaloberst von Einem.

f. The Activation of New Units and the Rehabilitation or Reactivation of Destroyed Units. In addition to officer replacements for units in the field, the Personnel Office also had to find officers for new units which were being activated and for badly battered units which had to be rehabilitated or reactivated.

For units in the field, officer replacements usually were assigned according to requirements while the unit was in action.

For rehabilitation, the unit was withdrawn from the front for a limited period and brought up to full strength in respect to personnel, arms, equipment and so forth.

Reactivation was necessary when a unit had been destroyed entirely by enemy action, as was the case with the units trapped in Stalingrad. In such cases, a new unit was formed and given the designation of the former unit. In order to maintain the traditions of the destroyed unit, the greatest possible number of officers who had served in it at any time were assigned to the new unit.

For the activation of new units and for the reactivation of

destroyed units, the officers required were usually assigned directly by the Personnel Office to the staffs handling the activation or reactivation. The responsibility of the Personnel Office ceased only when the organization of the staffs was completed and the wishes of the responsible commanders were fully satisfied.

For rehabilitations, the procedure was very much the same. The required officers were sent forward as early as possible so that they would have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with their new unit before going into action.

g. The New System for Requisitioning and Assigning Officer Replacements for the Field Army. Up to the autumn of 1942, units of the Field Army drew officer replacements directly from the appropriate Wehrkreise to fill any vacancies which occurred. The replacements were sent forward to the field units through the directing centers established in the communications zone. General Staff Corps officers were assigned directly by the Central Branch of the Army General Staff and the Personnel Office appointed only those replacements who were required to fill vacancies which were the direct responsibility of the office. After the autumn of 1942, the mounting losses and the resultant increase in officer replacement requirements compelled the Personnel Office to assume complete control of all officer personnel movements, so that transfers of officer personnel from the Replacement Training Army now could take place only by order or with the approval of the Personnel Office.

Owing to the great distance of the zones of operations from the

zone of interior, officer reserve pools had to be built up within the individual army groups and independently operating armies. In these reserve pools, officers of all ranks and services (excluding officers of general rank and officers of the General Staff Corps) were concentrated under a "commander of the officer reserve pool." In this way, it was possible to accelerate the replacement of officers lost in action. Initially, the army groups and independently operating armies required the approval of the Personnel Office before they could assign officers from their reserve pools but at a later stage they were only required to submit strength reports at certain intervals.

Requisitions for specialist officers and officers in the specialized services were forwarded by the appropriate technical and administrative superiors through their own channels. All other requisitions for officer replacements were forwarded by unit commanders through the regular channels of the Field Army. At army and army group level, consolidated officer replacement requisition reports were prepared for submission to the Personnel Office. These consolidated reports specified the number of officers required in each rank, who were requisitioned collectively, and, in a separate group, the officers requested specifically by name for assignment to vacancies for the filling of which the Personnel Office was directly responsible.

In order to insure that the officer replacements requested would not be out of proportion to the current strength of the requisitioning unit, it had become necessary to issue an order that, in calculating the

officer replacement requirements, consideration was to be given to the actual strength of the requisitioning unit as well as to the number of officers the unit was authorized to have according to its table of organization.

It was not always possible to allocate the full number of officers requested. For this reason, the Personnel Office gave due consideration to the urgency with which the various units needed replacements. The officers allocated in response to requisitions were drawn from the Army High Command officer reserve pool and from among the officers available in the various Wehrkreise and were sent forward as speedily as possible. Each unit of the Field Army had its permanent home Wehrkreis and its specific replacement unit.

The officers available in the Wehrkreise consisted of convalescent officers of all categories; officers serving as cadre personnel in the replacement units, who were replaced in the course of time by wounded officers; officer candidates newly promoted to regular and reserve officer rank and officers of the reserve and "retired subject to recall" categories whose recall had been deferred owing to the nature of their civilian employment.

Officer personnel directly available to the Personnel Office comprised officer candidates newly promoted to regular and reserve officer rank and whose employment the Personnel Office had reserved to itself, officers transferred from field units or from completed training courses to the Army High Command officer reserve pool, and several thousand

particularly well qualified officers serving as instructors in the service and officer candidate schools.

In mid-May 1944, the Personnel Office created an Army High Command special officer reserve pool, which was controlled by a commander. This pool consisted exclusively of unit commanders who could be sent forward to the front by air in cases of emergency.

Officer replacements were sent forward in groups or individually through the officer reserve pools of the army groups, Only in exceptional cases were they sent forward in replacement transfer battalions directly to the units concerned. Only officers from regimental commanders up were sent forward individually through the army groups to their new units.

From their reserve pools, the army groups allocated the officers to their divisions. In doing so, they were required to give every possible consideration to such details as the Wehrkreis from which an individual came, the parent unit of the replacement unit from which he came, and to requests by units for specifically named individuals.

h. Officer Personnel Adjustments. The losses suffered by individual units varied widely and replacements were not always immediately available. For this reason, the higher level commands in the field had been instructed in the spring of 1943 to make personnel adjustments themselves. Thus, if heavy losses compelled a division to place very young officers in command of battalions or NCOs in command of companies while in some quiet sector controlled by the same army headquarters senior captains were still in command of companies and first lieutenants

in command of platoons, the army was authorized to adjust the situation by transfers within its own command. This did not apply to vacancies which the Personnel Office had reserved the right to fill directly, but even in such cases the army concerned could make temporary appointments in cases of emergency. Higher level commands were also authorized to detach officers for temporary service in a unit of some other than their basic arm. In justifiable circumstances such detachments could be changed to permanent assignments through the Personnel Office.

By means of the previously mentioned officer personnel and assignment rosters which all units were required to submit, the Personnel Office was enabled to supervise all officer personnel adjustments made on the field. Various uses were made of these rosters, which were particularly valuable in the compilation of statistical material. They also made it possible to discover whether an officer was employed in an assignment in which his employment was no longer permissible in terms of the "Combing-out Order" of early spring 1943. This order was valid for the entire Wehrmacht and stipulated that all military personnel employed at nonessential duties in staffs, rear services or in the zone of interior and all military personnel who could be replaced by civilians, were to be released for combat service.

The program of officer personnel adjustment was extended to include the exchange of officers between quiet zones of operations, such as Finland, and more active fighting fronts. In addition, officers serving on the eastern front who had fought in Africa and Italy and there had

gathered experience in the tactics of Germany's western opponents, were exchanged and transferred to the west prior to the invasion.

IV. EDUCATION; AFFAIRS OF HONOR; WELFARE PROBLEMS; RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY.

While the officer corps was being established, educational problems and matters connected with offenses committed by officers were of primary importance but in the course of time the events of the war caused them to be relegated into the background to some extent. Nevertheless, every effort was made during the entire war to exercise an educational influence over all officers. The main work in this respect was done in the schools and training courses.

Welfare problems, particularly in connection with disabled officers and the dependents of officers killed in action, grew in importance as the war drew on. Every effort was made by the Personnel Office to give all possible assistance and to ameliorate existing hardships.

No liaison existed between the Personnel Office and the National Socialist Party and all controversial issues involving the Party were handled by Group P-2 of the Office. Apart from a very few exceptions, the Party exercised no influence on army appointments, particularly at higher levels, although it had attempted frequently, even before the war, to exercise such an influence. The officer corps of the German army was non-political and the German officer therefore had no right to vote. For officers retired subject to recall, the right to vote and party membership were temporarily suspended when they were recalled for military

service.

The National Socialist Party considered the Army its strongest opponent and did its utmost to extend its influence within the Army. However, even after the institution of national socialist guidance officers toward the end of the war, the Army countered by appointing to these posts as many regular, that is, non-political, officers as possible. Furthermore, the national socialist guidance officers were allowed no part in the preparation of efficiency reports.

Army officers were not rated from political viewpoints and their promotion and employment were determined solely on the basis of their qualifications and performances. The only information of a political nature that was required in the ratings was a statement by the commanding officer that the officer being rated was not opposed to the national socialist regime.

V. DECORATIONS

The question of decorations grew in importance as the war continued. On the one hand, decorations were a reward for valor and exceptionally good performances, on the other hand, they were an inducement to every member of the armed forces to perform well. Awards and decorations were the same for all members of the armed forces, whether they were officers or enlisted men.

One responsibility of the Personnel Office was to examine the recommendations submitted by the various units, to weigh them one against the other and to decide as justly as possible what decorations were to

be awarded. The more important decorations were presented by the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht or the commander in chief of that branch of the armed forces of which the person receiving the award was a member. At a later stage, decorations were presented in the army by the Commander in Chief of the Army, the Chief of the Army Personnel Office or by the commander of the appropriate army group or independently operating army.

The Personnel Office also submitted recommendations for the designing of new decorations if it considered the establishment of new decorations necessary in view of the long duration of the war.

The careful and just handling of matters connected with decorations was an important responsibility of the Personnel Office during the war since it had a very potent influence on the morale and aggressiveness of the troops.

VI. FINAL COMMENTS

In summarizing, it can be said that the officer personnel situation was strained throughout World War II and that the most strenuous efforts were necessary to make the required number of officers available.

In the early stages of the war the weak points were the incomplete organization of the officers' reserve corps and the fact that the influx of large numbers of officers immediately prior to the war had lowered the standards of performance in the regular corps of officers. From the opening of the Russian Campaign, heavy losses in officer personnel called for strenuous efforts to rectify the situation. Casualty rates increased later in the war. Thus, officer losses in killed, wounded

and missing in the great battles of 1943 amounted to 400 daily for weeks on end. The measures adopted to procure sufficient officer replacements under these circumstances have been described in the present study. In the 1942-44 period the shortage was chiefly at intermediate levels -- battalion and regimental commanders -- but from 1944 on, the shortage of division and army commanders also became acute.

However, in spite of all difficulties, the long-range policies introduced by the Personnel Office were instrumental in meeting all requirements in the field of officer replacements and at the end of the war a considerable reserve of officer personnel was available.

The rate at which the officer corps was expanded and the difficulties encountered in this expansion are best illustrated by the following figures:

The number of officers in the Reichswehr in 1933 was 4,000; by the end of 1944 this number had increased to roughly 350,000, not including approximately 70,000 line officers killed and lost in action. During the same period the number of officers with general rank had increased from 47 to 1,500, including 200 specialist officers and officers in the specialized services. Almost 300 general officers were killed in action or in accidents during the war.

It is only natural that the average standards of education sank as the war continued. However, severe measures were introduced in the training program to remedy this weakness, particular emphasis being placed on the thorough training and education of officer candidates. As a result of these measures and the careful process of selection, the

over-all performance of all officers was maintained at a high level right up to the end of the war and the large number of officers lost in action speaks eloquently for the devotion to duty of the entire officer corps. Even under the most severe strains, army officers performed their duty well and for this reason could depend on the loyalty of their men up to the last day of warfare.

What has been said in this study shows what a valuable instrument the personnel policy pursued by the Army Personnel Office was for the German Army High Command.

signed: Helmut Kleikamp

CHRONOLOGY OF CHANGES IN THE

ARMY PERSONNEL OFFICE

Mid-1941 With the opening of the campaign in Russia, the chief of the Army Personnel Office and a small working staff transferred to the headquarters of the Army High Command in East Prussia. The bulk of the Office remained in Berlin.

Mid-1942 Section 7 (Officer Candidate Affairs Section) of Group P-1 enlarged to form Group P-4, directly responsible to the Chief of the Personnel Office.

Branch P-2 reorganized as Group P-2.

Decorations Branch, hitherto under Branch P-2, reorganized as independent branch (Branch P-5) under the immediate supervision of the Chief of the Personnel Office.

October 1942 Chief aide to Hitler appointed Chief of the Army Personnel Office in addition to his current duties. Deputy Chief appointed to relieve burden on chief and assume responsibility for all subdivisions of the Office.

Mid-Oct. 1942 Senior Adjutant courses organized for training of senior personnel officers.

1 November 1942 Responsibility for personnel affairs of General Staff Corps transferred from Central Branch, Army General Staff, to Army Personnel Office. New Branch P-3 created for this purpose.

Former Branch P-3 continued its work as Branch P-7 of Group P-1. New Branch P-3 immediately responsible to Chief of Personnel Office.

Spring 43 Group P-4 (Officer Candidate Affairs Group) reduced to form Branch P-4.
Inspector of Army OfficerProcurement Centers appointed and attached to Branch P-4.

1 Mar 1944 Inspector of Army Officer Procurement Centers transferred, with increased responsibilities, to the newly appointed Inspector General of Officer Candidate Affairs.

1 May 1944 Group P-6 created to handle personnel affairs of specialist officers, officers in the specialized services, and technicians with officer rank.

Autumn 1944 Branch P-7 created as independent branch handling affairs of officers in Volksgrenadier* divisions. (A few months later this branch was discontinued for reasons of economy and simplification.)
Branch P-7 of Group P-1 discontinued for reasons of economy and simplification.

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* A new type of division organized from 1944 on. The new divisions had less man power but fire power was increased by increased number of automatic weapons. Translator

CHANGES IN LOCATION

The original location of the Army Personnel Office was Berlin. Transfers took place as follows:

August 1943	to	Luebben, Brandenburg
January 1945	to	Hannoversch-Muenden
April 1945	to	Traunstein, Bavaria
Early May 1945	to	a point south of Berchtesgaden, Bavaria.

Throughout the war, the chief (later the deputy chief) of the Personnel Office remained at the field headquarters of the Army High Command with a small staff.

Personnel Strength

In 1933, the staff of the Personnel Office consisted of about fifteen officers. At the end of the war, about 250 officers were employed although the budget had been cut repeatedly.

Chart B

THE ARMY PERSONNEL OFFICE

ORGANIZATION IN 1933

Chief of

Army Personnel Office

Branch P-1	Branch P-2	Branch P-3
Responsibilities:	Responsibilities:	Responsibilities:
Regular officers (excl. officers of the General Staff Corps)*	Education and affairs of honor	Officers on the supplementary list
Reserve Officers	Offenses, complaints, marriage approvals	Regular field grade officers retired subject to recall
Regular company grade officers retired subject to recall	Ceremonies and honors	Specialist officers, namely, officers in the veterinary, medical and ordnance services
Officer candidates		Technicians with temporary officer rank

* The personnel affairs of the General Staff Corps were handled by the Central Branch of the Army General Staff.